



THE MERKOS CHINUCH OFFICE ANNUAL REPORT

5774 * 2013-4

משרד החינוך
שע"י
המרכז לענייני חינוך

MERKOS L'INYONEI CHINUCH EDUCATION OFFICE



MERKOS L'INYONEI CHINUCH EDUCATION OFFICE

Rabbi Nochem Kaplan, Director

Departments

Mr. Eric Braunstein, TEAM

Rabbi Boruch Kaplan, Summer Kinusim

Mr. Bryan Kaplan, Chabad Consortium

Mrs. Bracha Kogan, Safety Kid Program

Ms. Esther Silberstein, M'Zman L'Zman

Rabbi Reuven Witkes, www.Chinuchworks.com

National Accreditation Board

Rabbi Nochem Kaplan, Ms. Ed, chair

Rabbi C. David Kagan Ph.D.

Rabbi Yitzchok Newman, MA. Ed.

Rivkah Denberg, Ms. Ed

Rabbi Meir Muller, Ed. D

Devorah Raitport, MA. Ed

Chana Silberstein, Ph.D.

Yisroel Blumenstein, Ed. D

Advisory

Rav Adin (Steinzaltz) Even Yisrael

Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky

Meyer Eichler

Shmuel Brook

Efraim Stigman

THE MERKOS CHINUCH OFFICE

ANNUAL REPORT

5774 * 2013-4

- I. WHAT THE CHINUCH OFFICE DOES FOR SCHOOLS
- II. SERVICES FOR SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS
- III. PROFESSIONALIZING OUR SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS

WHAT DOES THE CHINUCH OFFICE DO FOR SCHOOLS?

Schools Statistics

Last year's statistics among English speaking schools were:

	<i>United States</i>	<i>Canada</i>	<i>International English Speaking</i>
Early Childhood Centers	159	13	15
Elementary Schools	68	7	17
High Schools	35	4	12

SCHOOLS' SERVICES 5774 * 2013-14

- **ADVOCACY**

As the number of Chabad schools grows and enrollment increases so does the need to advocate to local educational and other authorities on their behalf. The Merkos Chinuch Office visited the US Dept. of Education in Washington DC, and a number of statehouses.

Last year (2013) there was a major “dust-up” regarding the adequacy of the general Studies programs in yeshivas and day schools in New York. The Merkos Chinuch Office represented Chabad schools in meetings with the leadership of other school networks to successfully deal with the issues raised.

- **CONSULTATIONS AND VISITATIONS**

The Office receives requests form Chabad schools daily asking for advice and assistance. Rabbi Nochem Kaplan, director of the Merkos Chinuch Office, responds personally wherever possible or refers questions to other professionals. During the School year 5774/2013-14 educational professionals visited more than 50 schools on behalf of the Merkos Chinuch Office (Rabbi Kaplan himself visited 32 schools).

- **THE CHABAD CONSORTIUM**

The federal government spends billions of dollars annually on education **The Chabad Consortium** was created by the Merkos Chinuch Office to assure that Chabad and other schools maximize their benefit from US Department of Education, Mr. Bryan Kaplan, a school consultant from LA, leads the consortium and has developed processes and programs which have brought millions of dollars (in education goods and services) to our mosdos. **The Crown Heights mosdos alone will be allocated more than \$3,000,000.**

The Chabad Consortium was instrumental in procuring a major new ruling this summer whereby graduates of seminaries and yeshivas will be able to serve as teachers for Title I services. This ruling had to trickle down from Washington, through Albany to the NYC Board of Ed. The next challenge is to get Title I funds for children who are home schooled.

The Chinuch Office may not receive any direct funds or services, though it bears the cost of running its programs.

- **TEACHER TRAINING AND PLACEMENT**

The Merkos Chinuch Office only exists to serve the ongoing educational needs of Chabad mosdos chinuch. The Office organizes in-service workshops and seminars in venues across the country. Often in-service is part of a school visit,

The Merkos Chinuch Office also recommends and places educational personnel wherever a match can be made. A number of principals other administrative personnel and many teachers were placed in the course of the last year.

- **MERKOS CHINUCH OFFICE, AN OFFICIAL VENDOR OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES TO LAUSD**

The Merkos Chinuch Office became an official Title I and Title II services vendor last year. This meant that tens of thousands of dollars for direct and indirect student services, such as student counseling programs, professional development for teachers, parenting courses etc. are provided by the Chinuch Office on behalf of the Los Angeles United School District (LAUSD).

Last year the Chinuch Office conducted P/D days, and parenting programs for yeshiva teachers and parents from across LA; next year other direct student services will be added. These services come at no charge to the school and directly benefit thousands of yeshiva students.

Chinuchworks.org - THE TEACHER CYBER CENTER

Chinuchworks.org was inaugurated last year. It took many months in the planning and development and it was met with immediate acclaim. More than 500 teachers enrolled within the first two weeks of operation.

The technology based **Chinuchworks.org** makes it possible for a teacher to download and prepare both textually and skills based lessons by making available thousands of well- designed and carefully edited student activities and is thus changing the situation one teacher at a time. It has the potential of being the most practical, transformative approach to curriculum development and teacher preparedness, in recent years.

Chinuchworks.org now features:

- **Student activities:** More than five thousand carefully designed teacher activities on הומש, from בראשית to דברים,
- **דברי תורה for teachers:** The repertoire of activities includes, specific lesson plans, assessments, and דברי תורה לפרשיות השבוע,
- **A Chummash skills hierarchy,** developed by the Chinuch Office to identify the myriad of exercises and student centered activities by skill set.

Stages of Chinuchworks.org now in development will soon include;

- **Curriculum development Center** to include all Judaic Subjects, Teachers' planning Toolbox, My Classroom, schedules and tracking

SERVICES FOR SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS

• **PROFESSIONAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

The Chinuch Office was instrumental in developing an independent group called **TEAM** (Teacher Education Assessment and Management) to facilitate professional education which been successful in developing an array of undergraduate and graduate programs with a number of universities which enable young men who have Smicha from an AARTS accredited yeshiva and young women who have attended an approved seminary, to matriculate for a Masters level program.

• **SUMMER CHINUCH CONFERENCES/WEBINARS**

For many years now, two education conferences, for men and women respectively, were held during the summer. Educators from across the country got together to listen to learn and to experience an atmosphere totally dedicated to education. The collegial atmosphere combined with the educational opportunities attracted both veterans and novices.

This year's conference was held in Danbury CT at the end of June and was attended by nearly 200 educators from across the country. Conference sessions centered on a number of current themes; the art of productive communication, issues relating to קדושה and יראת שמים as well curriculum and management. They were professionally rigorous, and very well received.

- **SCHOOL SAFETY: THE "SAFETY KID" PROJECT**

The issue of child safety, has been one in which the Merkos Chinuch Office has taken the lead for more than a decade. The Merkos Chinuch Office researched and published the first comprehensive Child-Safety guidelines in 2002; ultimately adapted by many educational agencies. Most recently the issue of keeping children safe from predators and abuse has been brought to the fore and the Merkos Chinuch Office embarked upon a child safety initiative.

The first focus was on the Crown Heights community. A cadre of parents was trained to meet with children in every classroom in all the Crown Heights educational institutions and with the teaching staff of all children from Kindergarten through third grade. This year the program was extended to the 4th grade in many schools. **More than 5,000 children in Crown Heights were trained in the "Safety Kid" program.**

- **EDUCATION GRANTS AND GRANTS TO EDUCATORS.**

The Chinuch Office has been a base for a variety of donors to educational causes. Typically the office will come into contact with individuals or foundations who wish to contribute to a particular educational cause.

During the past year a number of scholarships to teachers and principals for professional development were awarded totaling thousands of dollars. **More than \$100,000 was granted as pre Yom-tov gifts, to teachers in schools that were not current in their salary commitments.**

- **NEW PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS.**

One of the responsibilities of the Chinuch Office is study trends, evaluate problems and take anticipatory action. Being proactive in education goes to the very core of what education is about.

THE MACHSHEVES TAHARA PROJECT

The Chinuch Office launched a task force, which included the menahalim of the major Chabad mosdos and concerned mechanchim, to find appropriate approaches to helping adolescents understand and cope with the issues associated with their physical maturity, from a Torah and Chassidic perspective.

Garnering our best "kochos," and spending appropriate time and resources in addressing all its various parameters was deemed essential. Much of the preliminary work has been done. Source material for the

development of a curriculum has been gathered, initial meetings with schools have been very successful in involving cadre of talented mechanchim and a full course of action is being developed.

YOUNG LEADERSHIP PROJECT

Chabad school principals, especially in smaller communities have a different set of professional needs form administrators in the large mosdos of major proportions. Many of them need to make up with dedication and enthusiasm for their little professional experience. Yet they are charged with great responsibility, in some ways more than their big city friends.

The Chinuch Office spearheaded a new effort to promote cooperative efforts and create a professional brotherhood of these school leaders. They will discuss problems and share solutions.

PROFESSIONALIZING OUR SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS

• MERKOS NATIONAL ACCREDITATION BOARD

The National Accreditation Board of Merkos Chinuch Office is still the only Jewish Accreditation Association. The NABMLC has been approved by the national umbrella association of private accrediting agencies, National Council for Private School Accreditation, NCPSA.

The NABMLC follows the same protocols established by the U.S. regional accrediting agencies more than a century. A system of reciprocity for members of regional and national agencies has existed for some time. Once the school is NABMLC accredited it automatically becomes eligible for NCPSA accreditation as well and its accreditation is recognized by the highly regarded regional accrediting agencies.

During the school year 2013-2014 the following schools completed an accreditation protocol:

- Hebrew Academy Community School, Margate FL
- Hillel Hebrew Academy, Milwaukee WI
- Desert Hebrew Academy, Las Vegas NV

The following schools prepared for an accreditation visit in the fall of 2014

- South Florida Jewish Academy, Coconut Creek, FL

• MERKOS' INTERNATIONAL BOARD OF LICENSE

The Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch International Board of License for teachers and principals in Jewish schools was designed both to set standards and to provide recognition of qualified educators. All accrediting agencies require professional certification; MLCNAB requires that all teachers have a Merkos International License. Thus the MLCIBL benefits both veterans with many years of experience as well as those who are entering the field with little formal training.

• CURRICULUM MATERIALS

The Merkos Chinuch Office publishes curriculum material written by and for educators in Chabad schools. Chabad schools span a wide continuum of educational philosophies. The particular demographic of each school, the intensity of educational requirements and the religious standards expected within the schools dictate the nature of their individual curricula. **The Merkos Chinuch Office provides curriculum guidance and materials specific to a particular school or discipline when the need and the benefit are obvious.** This department will merge next year with Chinuchworks.org, Merkos Cyber Teacher Center, where web developers have created platforms for Chabad curricula as earlier mentioned.

Available at the moment are curricula on:

- Day School Curriculum Outline
- The *Chagim*
- Detailed Chumrash Curriculum Outline
- Gemorah skills outline
- Tefilla Curriculum
- *Inyonei Moshiach*